



Supreme Court  
of Canada

Ipsos Public Affairs



# Comeau Case Canadian Opinion Survey

NOVEMBER 2017

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GAME CHANGERS



# Methodology



## DATA COLLECTION

- A sample of 1,103 Canadians from the Ipsos I-Say panel was interviewed, including 100 residents of New Brunswick



## FIELD DATES

- October 26<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup> 2017



## ACCURACY

- Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects the overall population according to census information.
- The precision of online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the results are accurate to within +/- 3.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had all Canadian adults been polled.
- Credibility interval are wider among subsets of the population

# Executive Summary

## Comeau Case

- Though few Canadians have heard of the case of New Brunswick man Gérard Comeau, who is the subject of a case appealed by the Government of New Brunswick to the Supreme Court of Canada, a majority have a clear view on who should win the case. The weight of public opinion is behind Comeau, who was fined by the Government of New Brunswick for bringing beer he had bought in Quebec, where it is cheaper, home to New Brunswick.
  - One in four Canadians (24%) are aware of the case, 67% haven't heard of it, and 10% aren't sure.
  - Eight in ten (78%) think Comeau should win the case, while only 7% think the Government of New Brunswick should win. One in ten (15%) don't know.
- Awareness of the case is, unsurprisingly, much stronger in New Brunswick (59%) than anywhere else. Despite this, New Brunswick residents are similarly in favour of a Supreme Court win for Comeau (81% think he should win) to most of the rest of the country.

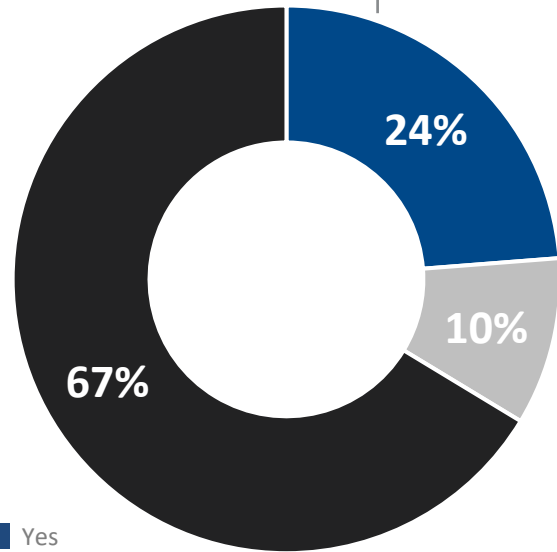
## Provincial Monopolies and Trade Barriers

- Popular preference for a Supreme Court victory by Comeau is mirrored by the attitudes Canadians have to making purchases across provincial borders. Nearly all (86%) disagree with provinces protecting their alcohol-sale monopolies by fining citizens who buy wine or beer from other provinces, while most agree (and a majority strongly agree) that Canadians should be allowed to:
  - Bring any legally purchased product from one province to another: 89%
  - Order any legal product from anywhere in the country: 88%
  - Order wine directly from a winery in another province: 84%
  - Bring any amount of beer or wine they buy in one province into another province: 78%
- Free trade is seen as a national unity issue: nine in ten Canadians (88%) say there should be free trade between the provinces "because we are one country." A majority see reducing trade barriers between provinces as being good for consumers (81%) and Canadian businesses (77%). By contrast, very few agree with provincial restrictions on goods from other provinces, whether it's to protect their own industries (16%) or to collect more revenues (12%).
- While there is majority agreement across all demographic groups with being able to buy across borders without incurring fines, and with free provincial trade and reduced barriers, Canadians aged 55 and over tend to voice the strongest agreement, and the most opposition to trade restrictions at the provincial level.

# DETAILED FINDINGS

# Awareness of MEI Case

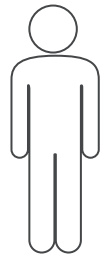
- One in four Canadians (24%) have heard of the Supreme Court case, leaving three in four who either aren't aware of it or aren't sure. Awareness of the case is stronger among men and Baby Boomers, and is higher in New Brunswick than anywhere else in the country.



■ Yes  
■ I'm not sure  
■ No

## % YES

### GENDER



**33%** of men,  
vs. 15% of women

### AGE

**55+**

**35%** of Baby Boomers,  
vs. 17% of Gen X'ers and  
15% of Millennials.

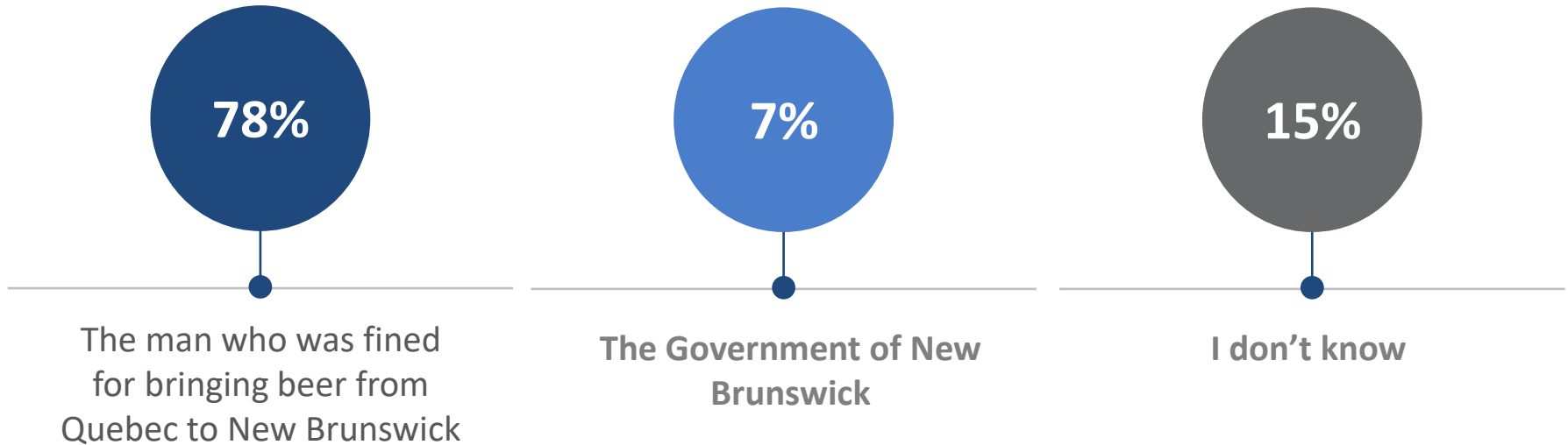


**59%** of residents in New Brunswick are aware of the case, contributing to 40% of those in Atlantic Canada, followed by Ontario (28%), Alberta (24%), British Columbia (20%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (19%), and Quebec (14%).

Q.1. Later this year, Canada's Supreme Court will hear a case about a New Brunswick man who was stopped and fined by the government of New Brunswick for bringing beer he had bought in Quebec, where it is cheaper, home to New Brunswick. Before today, had you heard about this case?  
Base: All Respondents (n=1,1103)

# Who Should Win the Supreme Court Case?

- Despite a lack of knowledge about the case, a majority of Canadians have an opinion on what the outcome should be. Nearly eight in ten (78%) think the man who was fined should win the case, while 7% think it should be the government of New Brunswick, leaving 15% who aren't sure.



Q2. At his trial, the man who was fined for bringing beer from Quebec to New Brunswick argued that the Canadian constitution guaranteed that goods from any one of the provinces shall be admitted free into each of the other Provinces. The trial judge agreed and ruled that the law was unconstitutional. The New Brunswick government has appealed that decision to the Supreme Court of Canada, arguing that the Constitution only prohibits customs duties and not other types of interprovincial barriers. Who do you think should win the Supreme Court case? Base: All Respondents (n=1103)

# Who Should Win the Supreme Court Case?

78%



55+

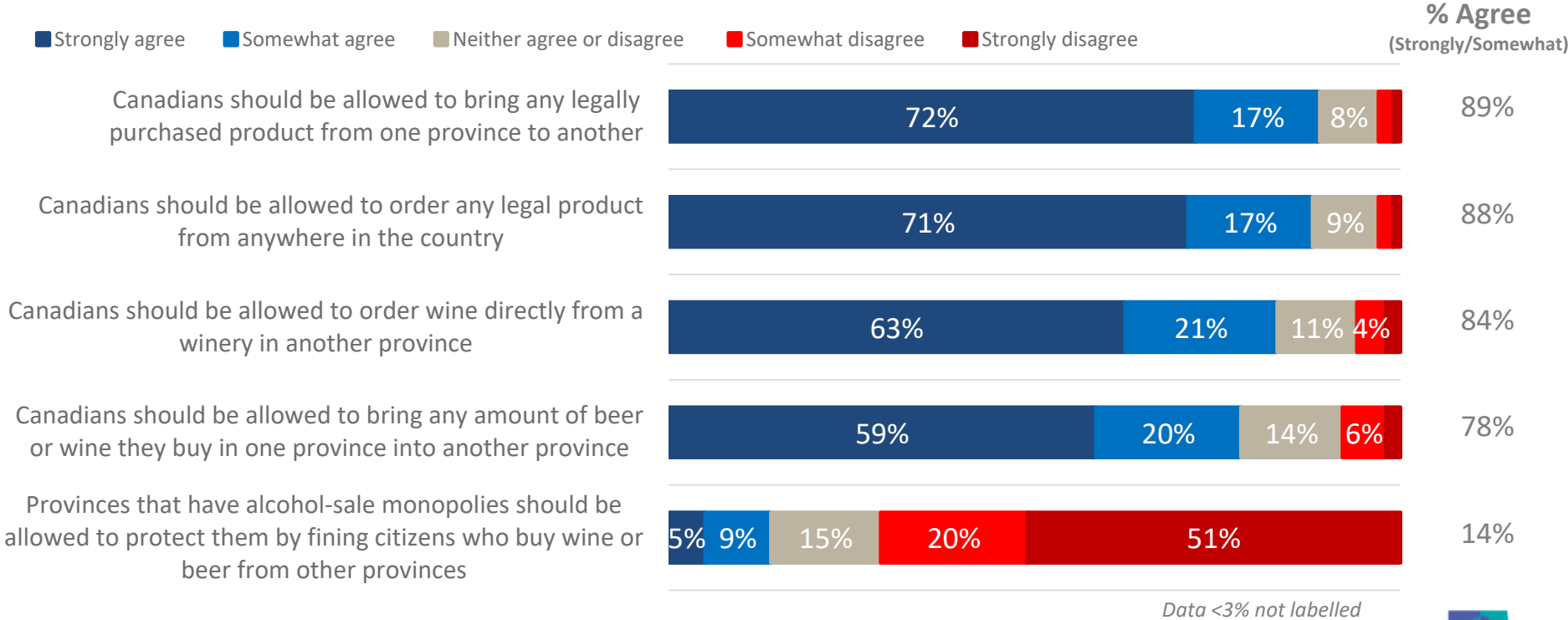
The man who was fined for bringing beer from Quebec to New Brunswick

**86%** of Atlantic Canadians (including 81% of New Brunswick residents) say the man who was fined for bringing beer from Quebec to New Brunswick should win, followed by residents of Ontario (84%), Alberta (80%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (80%), British Columbia (77%), Quebec (66%).

**87%** of Baby Boomers, vs. 74% of Gen X'ers and 73% of Millennials.

# Out-of-Province Purchases and Alcohol-Sale Monopolies

- Most Canadians agree (and a majority strongly agree) they should be allowed to bring or order legally purchased products from one province to another, including wine and beer. Conversely, seven in ten disagree (half of them strongly) that provinces with alcohol-sale monopolies should be allowed to protect them by fining citizens who buy wine or beer from other provinces.





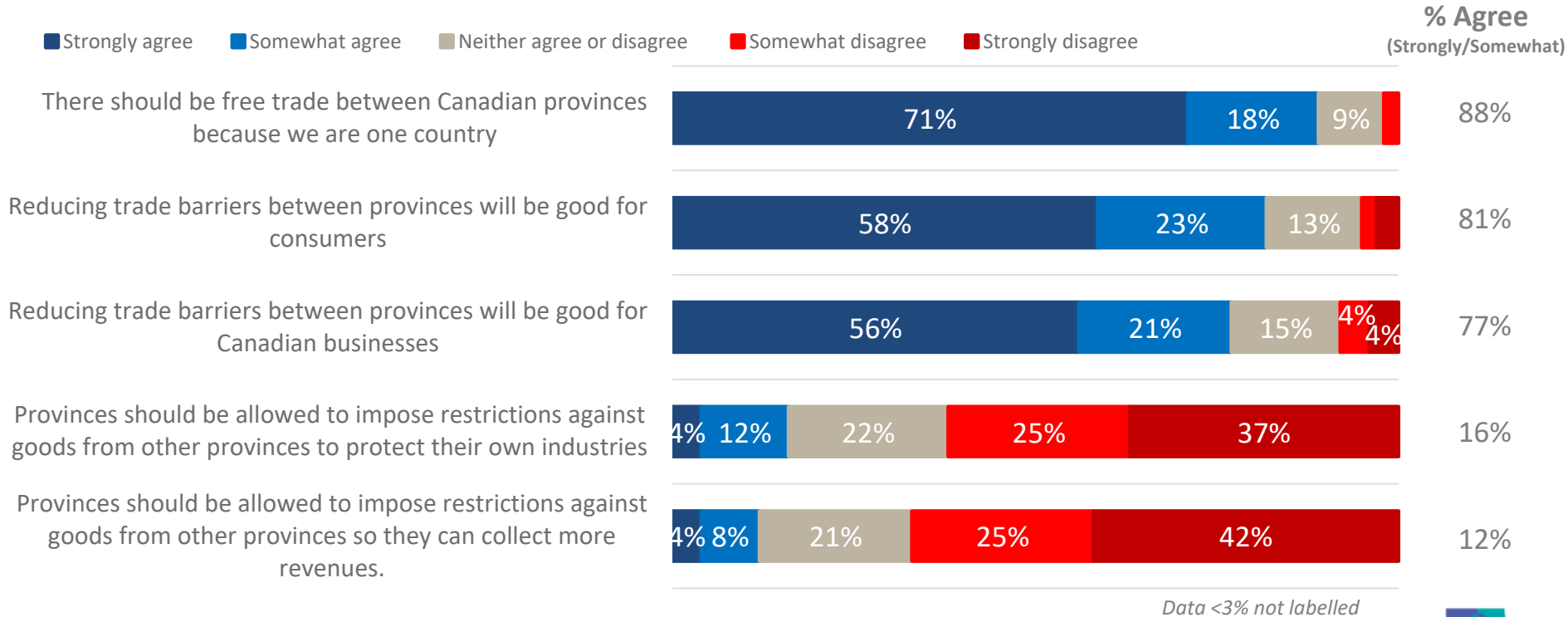
# Out-of-Province Purchases and Alcohol-Sale Monopolies

- While majority agreement on out-of-province purchases can be seen across all demographic groups, it is noticeably stronger among Baby Boomers than Gen X or Millennial Canadians, who in turn are more likely to agree with protecting provincial monopolies through fines. Regionally, Quebecers have softer agreement on cross-border purchases compared to those elsewhere in Canada. New Brunswick residents are the most likely to agree with fines to protect alcohol-sale monopolies.

% Agree (Strongly/Somewhat)	Total	AGE			REGION						
		18-34	35-54	55+	BC	AB	SK/MB	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic	New Brunswick
<i>Base: All Respondents</i>	1103	252	441	410	120	102	101	350	230	200	100
		C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Canadians should be allowed to bring any legally purchased product from one province to another	89%	82%	88%	<b>95% CD</b>	89%	91%	<b>95% E</b>	<b>91% E</b>	82%	<b>93% E</b>	90%
Canadians should be allowed to order any legal product from anywhere in the country	88%	82%	85%	<b>95% CD</b>	87%	86%	92%	90%	84%	<b>95% ABEG</b>	89%
Canadians should be allowed to order wine directly from a winery in another province	84%	76%	82%	<b>90% CD</b>	<b>91% EG</b>	<b>87% E</b>	<b>88% E</b>	<b>87% E</b>	70%	<b>88% EG</b>	80%
Canadians should be allowed to bring any amount of beer or wine they buy in one province into another province	78%	70%	78%	<b>85% CD</b>	<b>81% E</b>	<b>82% E</b>	<b>81% E</b>	<b>83% E</b>	67%	<b>80% E</b>	<b>81% E</b>
Provinces that have alcohol-sale monopolies should be allowed to protect them by fining citizens who buy wine or beer from other provinces	14%	<b>27% DE</b>	<b>11% E</b>	6%	12%	<b>21% D</b>	<b>20% D</b>	10%	15%	<b>18% D</b>	<b>29% ADEF</b>

# Trade Barriers in Canada

- Nine in ten Canadians (88%) agree there should be free trade between the provinces because Canada is one country. Agreement with reducing trade barriers is strong, with a majority seeing benefits for consumers (81%) and Canadian businesses (77%). Most are opposed to province imposing restrictions against goods from other provinces, particularly when framed as a source of collecting more revenues.



# Trade Barriers in Canada

- In line with their strong support of unrestricted out-of-province purchases, Baby Boomers voice the strongest agreement for freer trade and reduced barriers between provinces. A majority of younger Canadians also agree with these concepts, but are more sympathetic to the concept of protecting provincial industry and growing revenues through trade restrictions. The “one country” argument for free trade holds more sway in the Atlantic provinces outside of New Brunswick, as does the idea that reduced barriers will be good for Canadian businesses.

% Agree (Strongly/Somewhat)	Total	AGE			REGION						
		18-34	35-54	55+	BC	AB	SK/MB	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic	New Brunswick
<i>Base: All Respondents</i>	1103	252	441	410	120	102	101	350	230	200	100
		C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
There should be free trade between Canadian provinces because we are one country	88%	83%	86%	<b>95% CD</b>	90%	88%	<b>92% E</b>	<b>91% E</b>	81%	<b>92% EG</b>	87%
Reducing trade barriers between provinces will be good for consumers	81%	70%	<b>79% C</b>	<b>90% CD</b>	83%	79%	80%	83%	77%	80%	77%
Reducing trade barriers between provinces will be good for Canadian businesses	77%	64%	<b>74% C</b>	<b>88% CD</b>	80%	76%	80%	77%	73%	<b>81% G</b>	74%
Provinces should be allowed to impose restrictions against goods from other provinces to protect their own industries	16%	<b>22% E</b>	<b>18% E</b>	11%	14%	18%	<b>24% D</b>	14%	18%	18%	17%
Provinces should be allowed to impose restrictions against goods from other provinces so they can collect more revenues.	12%	<b>18% E</b>	<b>13% E</b>	7%	5%	<b>14% A</b>	<b>19% AD</b>	10%	<b>16% A</b>	<b>13% A</b>	9%

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